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Technical Assistance at the Georgia Health Policy Center

The Georgia Health Policy Center (GHPC) at Georgia State University provides evidence-based research, program development, policy guidance, and technical assistance. The center focuses on solutions to complex issues facing health care today including insurance coverage, long-term care, health care reform, children's health, and the development of rural and urban health systems. We work locally, statewide, and nationally to improve health at the community level.

Our tailored technical assistance is focused on helping communities build local capacity to increase access to care and improve the health status of their residents. A signature service of the GHPC is integrated and targeted technical assistance to agencies and communities to support programmatic and organizational development of rural and community health systems.

Approach: *Strategy. Capacity. Sustainability.*

The GHPC has been supporting community health system change through technical assistance since its founding in 1995. The GHPC has provided technical assistance and capacity building support to more than 800 rural and urban communities in Georgia and nationwide. Clients include local, state, and national organizations. Our technical assistance is centered around helping communities develop a strategic approach to program implementation, building capacity utilizing technical and adaptive approaches, and focusing on long-term sustainability. The process provides a logical progression of activities to support communities in accomplishing their goals: focusing first on developing a strategic mindset, then building requisite skills and capacities, and integrating sustainability strategies.

Technical Assistance Services	
Strategy	Design programs that have impact
Capacity	Build competencies
Sustainability	Plan for the long-term
Evaluation	Understand and document program impact
Board and consortium development	Create the infrastructure to support programs and build commitment among partners and stakeholders
Research design	Design effective processes
Resources	Best practices, tools, templates, etc.



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Sustainability Framework[®]

The content of the technical assistance program is unified by a Sustainability Framework[®] developed by the GHPC to describe those attributes which have been associated in our experience and in the literature with long-term viability of community-based health initiatives. The GHPC Sustainability Framework[®] addresses the issue from a systems perspective, meaning that a broad range of interrelated topics are included based on the understanding that sustainability relates to the way the whole system (the program or organization within its local, state, and national context) functions. Our framework identifies the components that contribute to organizational and programmatic sustainability.

The GHPC provides capacity building in each of the factors of the Sustainability Framework[®]: strategic vision, collaboration, leadership, relevance and practicality, evaluation and return on investment, communication, efficiency and effectiveness, organizational capacity, and resource diversification.

Principles

The GHPC's technical approach to support system change and improve health is grounded in principles derived from our work with communities and has been tested on a national level. We believe that communities benefit most from support that is:

- Relationship-based;
- Systematic, but flexible;
- Systems-oriented;
- Sustainability-focused; and
- Technical and adaptive.

Project Examples

Office of Rural Health Policy Technical Assistance Program

The CHSD team has been supporting grantees of the Health Resources and Services Administration's Office of Rural Health Policy since 2002, providing technical assistance to more than 550 Rural Health Care Services' Network Planning, Network Development, Workforce Development, Outreach, and Delta States grantees across the country. The team believes that the most effective technical assistance is provided by people who are in an ongoing relationship with the communities they serve. Based on this conviction, each grantee is assigned a dedicated technical assistance consultant who works in partnership with the grantee throughout the grant period.



This long-term association allows the technical assistance consultants to develop trust and rapport with grantees through an understanding of their communities, partners, and program goals. The consultant serves as an unbiased partner for sharing challenges and offering objective consultation.

PRevention Impacts Simulation Model (PRISM) Utilization

PRISM is a computer simulation model for population-level health. Integrating the best available evidence on modifiable risk factors and demonstrated interventions, it provides a plausible look at the impact of proposed or implemented actions on long-term chronic disease indicators and costs.

As part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Communities Putting Prevention to Work and Community Transformation Grants awards, the GHPC is partnering to provide training, coaching, and technical assistance for awardees under these grants. The GHPC PRISM team provides customized, one-on-one technical assistance to awardees in their use, interpretation, and application of the PRISM model (including site visits); develops user-friendly translation material to help awardees navigate the PRISM online.

